

Interview Questions – Preparation

Tell me about yourself. *This is one of the most commonly asked interview questions. Be sure that you are speaking to your professional “self” when responding to this question. Rely on your resume as an outline to respond to this question. Give a brief outline of how you got to where you are at, and why you are passionate about the field that you are going into.*

What experience do you have in this field? *This can be tough if you are entry-level, but speak to any schooling that relates to the field, and any transferable skills, volunteer experience or internship/externship experiences that are relatable as well.*

What do you know about our organization/company? *Know the company’s current issues, their mission statement and the major players in the industry. DO YOUR RESEARCH. This is your opportunity to use compliments (within reason) and news-worthy information to outshine the rest of the competition. I can’t state enough to DO YOUR RESEARCH!*

Why do you want to work for our organization? *Similar to the last question, you need to know information about the organization, the position and your skills and qualifications. Be prepared to align your professional mission to their mission and speak to how you will make a positive impact.*

Please describe your strengths and a weakness. *Nobody wants to admit to having a weakness. I always suggest starting out with a weakness that does not directly impact the job that you are interviewing for and let them know what you have been doing to improve upon that weakness. FOR EXAMPLE: Perhaps you have a fear of public speaking or speaking in front of large crowds; but when applying for a position in the healthcare industry, chances are this will not directly impact your job or your patients. You might be able to state that you have been working on overcoming this fear through the group presentations that you have done in your courses, but still feel that this skill could use additional work. Then go on to speak about a couple of your strengths that directly correlate to the position that you are interviewing for.*

Can you give an example of your problem-solving ability? *Give a specific example of where you used creative thinking and problem solving to find an innovative way to work out an issue with positive results.*

Why did you leave your last position? *This is not the time to divulge all the dirt on your old boss, coworkers, or your poor work conditions. While your last job may have been the worst job in the history of the universe, you certainly don't need to let anyone know this. If there is nothing positive to say about your old workplace, just keep it short and respectful and say you left to pursue other opportunities. This might also be an opportunity to speak to what you learned and how you grew with your previous employer, and what has prepared you to take the next step in your career.*

What would your co-workers say about you? *This may seem like a difficult question at first, but given a little time to think about it, you will probably remember something amazing someone you worked with once said about you. Use that information here. It has pretty much the same effect as if your co-worker were actually there speaking on your behalf. Be confident about your abilities and successes.*

Have you ever been in a situation where you struggled with another employee? *Always remain positive when describing previous co-workers or supervisors. Think about a time that you had a disagreement with a co-worker and describe how you negotiated and came to a mutually satisfactory resolution.*

Can you give me an example of a time that you went “above and beyond” your normal responsibilities? *This example should be something specific which translates to quality needed to succeed in the position. You can speak to extra time that you took to do something well to support someone else, or how your attention to detail on something made a positive impact on the team overall in some way.*

Have you ever made a bad decision that you regretted? *Everybody makes mistakes, so don’t give an example where you had terrible decision making skills. Select an occurrence that allowed you to learn a good lesson and describe how you grew from it. Let them know about the situation and how you would make changes if given the opportunity to do it again.*

Give an example of an obstacle or major problem that you had to overcome in your career? *Go over an event or some change in direction in your career that you might have been initially uncomfortable with but that turned into a positive experience.*

Can you give an example of when you missed a deadline and had to have it extended? *Highlight your flexibility and emphasize the circumstance around the deadline extension, and any new factors that came into play. Describe how you adapted to those factors. Be sure to use an example that allowed you to learn and grow; and resulted in a positive outcome.*

What kind of salary do you require? *Be prepared to address this type of question if it is asked. Do your research on what the salary range might be for the type of position that you are interviewing for and the city that you will be working in. Be sure to mention the salary RANGE, and mention that your salary is negotiable based on the full compensation package.*

Do you have any questions for me? *Have a few (or perhaps more than a few) questions prepared to ask the employer. The employer will assume that you are really not all that attracted to the position or the company if you have absolutely no questions. Intelligent questions establish you as a prepared and respectful individual, and that you are truly interested in the position that you are interviewing for, and the company that you are interviewing with. Some examples of question to consider asking at the end of the interview are:*

- What opportunities are there for professional development or advancement?
- How would you describe a typical day/week in this position?
- What is the company’s management style?
- What are the first priorities for this position?
- What are your expectations for the first 30-90 days in this position?
- What do you think are the most important qualities for someone to excel in this role? OR Are there any skills needed for this position that we have not discussed? *(This gives you to opportunity to speak more about why you would be a good fit, and emphasize more of your qualifications.)*
- What are the biggest challenges facing the company / department right now?
- In what way is performance measured and reviewed?
- What is your timeframe for filling the position? OR what are the next steps in the interview process?
- How might I contact you to follow up?

DO NOT ASK:

- ❖ What does this company do? – you should already know this from your research
- ❖ What are the benefits? – Salary and benefits can be discussed once the position is offered
- ❖ Did I get the job?
- ❖ What did the last person in my position leave?
- ❖ Is there any way to consider an alternate schedule?